

## Hamlet: Dramatis Personae

**Hamlet, Prince of Denmark** The crown prince of Denmark who returns from the university in Wittenberg, Germany, to find his father dead, his mother married to the king's brother Claudius, and Claudius the newly self-crowned King.

**Claudius, King of Denmark** Dead King Hamlet's brother who has usurped the throne and married his sister-in-law.

**Gertrude, Queen of Denmark** Prince Hamlet's mother, King Hamlet's widow, King Claudius' wife.

**The Ghost** Spirit of the late King Hamlet, condemned to walk the earth until his soul is cleansed of its sins.

**Polonius** The elderly Lord Chamberlain, chief counselor to Claudius.

**Horatio** A commoner, Horatio went to school with Hamlet and remains his loyal best friend.

**Laertes** A student in Paris, Laertes is Polonius' son and Ophelia's brother; he returns from school because of King Hamlet's death, leaves to go back to Paris, and then returns again after his own father's murder.

**Ophelia** Daughter of Polonius, sister of Laertes, Ophelia is the beloved of Hamlet.

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern** Classmates of Hamlet's in Wittenberg. Claudius summons them to Elsinore to spy on Prince Hamlet.

**Fortinbras** King of Norway, bound to avenge his father's death by the Danes' hands.

**Osric** Affected courtier who plays a minor role as the King's messenger and as umpire of the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes.

**Voltimand and Cornelius** Danish courtiers who are sent as ambassadors to the Court of Norway.

**Marcellus and Barnardo** Danish officers on guard at the castle of Elsinore.

**Francisco** Danish soldier on guard at the castle of Elsinore.

**Reynaldo** Young man whom Polonius instructs and sends to Paris to observe and report on Laertes' conduct.

**Two Clowns (the Gravediggers)** Two rustics (identified as clowns) who dig Ophelia's grave.